



the Humanitarian
group



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018



Akram (Ak) Sabbagh

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

This year, The Humanitarian Group's Board continued to work with the leadership team to secure continuity of services to those in our community whom we serve.

Again, it has not been an easy year with cuts to funding and changes to how the Federal and State Governments fund the provision of legal services in the refugee, asylum seeker and culturally and linguistically diverse community sectors. Given this environment, the Board, by necessity, was required to review the structure of our operations and make some tough decisions.

By far the biggest and hardest decision was to restructure The Humanitarian Group and in doing so making the role of CEO, competently held and led by Helen Pearce, redundant. On behalf of the Board, the team at The Humanitarian Group and our clients, I want to formally thank Helen for her outstanding work in leading the organisation and in managing the transition to exit in the professional and

diligent way she manages all aspects of her life. It was indeed fitting that Helen's passion and work for the community was publically and independently acknowledged by Rotary International by awarding her a Paul Harris Fellowship Award – the highest honour in Rotary.

The Humanitarian Group continues to support a large number of vulnerable people. The type of work and volume of clients is set out in this Annual Report. None of it could happen without our dedicated and committed team of high achieving staff led by Kathy Bogoyev and Carol Child. They are supported by an extensive network of volunteers, a community of local law firms – large and small – who provide pro bono services, interpreters and others.

The Board acknowledges and thanks the work of all who make it possible to provide our services.



Kathy Bogoyev

REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR AND EXECUTIVE MANAGER

Over the past year we assisted 2,093 people and their families from 77 different countries, the majority of whom have experienced torture and trauma. Despite ongoing challenges, we took the opportunity to deliver services in new, innovative and collaborative ways to ensure we are always striving to meet the needs of clients in a holistic way. We were delighted with the results of our client survey which revealed very high satisfaction rates.

The past year saw the introduction of the new Department of Home Affairs, significant changes to the IAAAS funding scheme for protection visa applicants and major future changes under a proposed visa simplification framework.

We saw changes at an operational level with a restructure and the sad departure of our esteemed CEO Helen Pearce. We relocated from Uniting Care West premises in Victoria Park and extend our gratitude to Uniting Care West for their generous support of The Humanitarian Group over the past 6 years.

We are proud of our many achievements, including Phase 2 Accreditation under the National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres, recognition of individual

staff members, participation in international workshops and a wide range of parliamentary inquiries and acknowledgement of our supporters by the United Nations Association of Australia (WA). We mention in particular, Helen Pearce who was a finalist both in the Australian Human Rights Commission Human Rights Awards and in the Lawyers Weekly Women in Law Awards, and Katy Welch who was co-recipient of Women Lawyers of WA's Junior Lawyer of the Year and Law Society of WA's Lawyer of the Year Finalist.

As we prepare for the year ahead, we maintain our focus on empowering vulnerable people by providing professional and accessible migration assistance and legal advice.

We continue to strive for excellence in service delivery, engaged staff and volunteers, a sustainable future and a reputation as leaders in the sector. We are grateful to our staff, Board, volunteers and the community for all their efforts over the past year. The big hearts and collective energy of all our supporters is what propels us forward to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients.



Carol Child

OUR WORK IN 2017-2018

According to the UN Refugee Agency's annual Global Trends study war, violence and persecution have forcibly displaced more people around the world than ever – the equivalent of one person every three seconds. Closer to home, legislative and policy changes at a Federal level have added further complexity to the processes applicable to those seeking safety in Australia. This is the context in which we work.

In 2017-2018 we provided over 2,500 services to the 2,093 people and their families who approached us for assistance. Many of our clients present with a range of different issues beyond the legal or migration advice they are seeking. With that in mind we are very proud of our work at the Asylum

Seeker Hub where our clients receive not only legal and migration advice but also wrap around support to meet their social, welfare and psychological needs.

We are constantly faced with difficult decisions about who we can assist, requiring complex assessments of current capacity and the vulnerabilities of individual clients. We estimate that over 300 people (600 including family members) did not approach us for assistance due to the temporary suspension of some services from July to October, before the new Outreach Support Service commenced in November 2017.

Behind these statistics are individuals and families whose lives have been

overturned by war, violence and persecution. The significance of our work to the people we assist was demonstrated in the overwhelmingly positive responses to a recent client survey conducted as part of the funding requirements under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-2020. It is summed up in the comment from one of the survey participants:

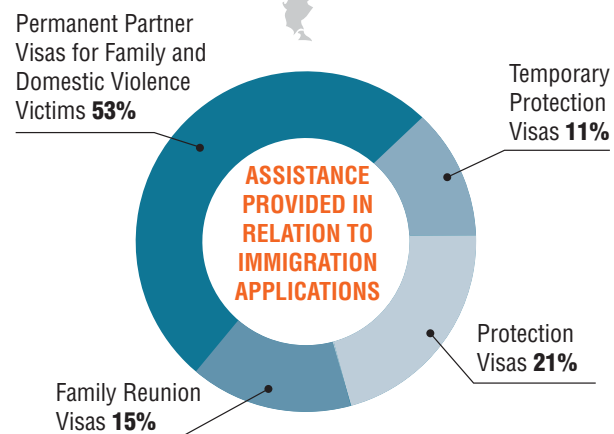
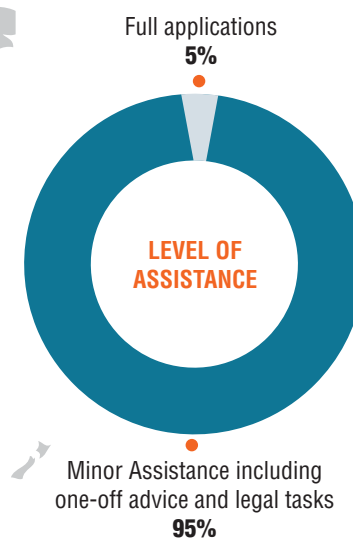
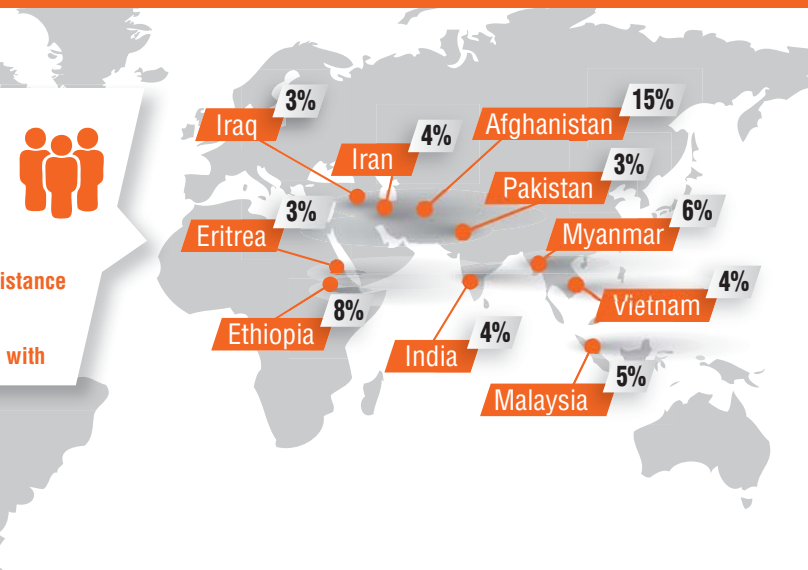
"They have really helped people in difficult situations, including me. They provide the right support and encourage me a lot and they allow me to be more confident, and put me at ease as they really care about my problems. I just wanted to say thank you to all for helping me."

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

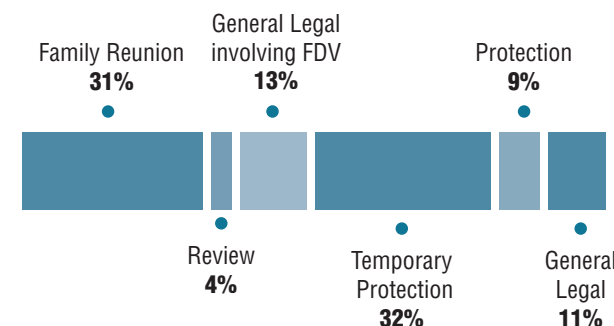
This year, we assisted people from **77 different countries**. Illustrated are the top 10 countries of origin.

2,093 people required assistance

2,546 matters we assisted with



BREAKDOWN OF WORK BY MATTER TYPE



Achara* is from Thailand. She came to Australia in 2015 to be with her Australian citizen husband. After she arrived, they had a child together. Achara's husband subsequently isolated her from the community and was violent towards her, which included making multiple threats involving weapons. Achara left the relationship with her child and came to The Humanitarian Group for assistance. With our help, Achara was granted a permanent visa in May 2018.

MIGRATION AND LEGAL SERVICES

The Humanitarian Group saw significant changes affecting service delivery throughout the 2017-2018 year.

The Federal Government introduced a deadline of 1 October 2017 for the lodgement of all temporary protection visas (TPVs). This saw a decrease in workload and the end of the pro bono TPV clinics. During the course of the TPV Project assistance was provided to 620 people to lodge applications. We provided advice and information on over 2,800 occasions. The pending workload remains high with many clients waiting for decisions and early visa recipients requiring assistance with subsequent applications.

Our partners at the Asylum Seeker Hub continue to work with us to support clients, with Careers Kitchen and

Fremantle Multicultural Centre Service expanding the available services.

In November 2017 we launched an Outreach Support Service based at Red Cross. This has been a huge success and a great opportunity to engage with new humanitarian entrants. It has further demonstrated the benefits of collaborative and holistic service provision already realised at the Asylum Seeker Hub.

In June 2018 our VOICE Project funding ceased. Evaluations of the Project demonstrate the benefits of providing multi-pronged support. The education sessions run for refuge workers were extremely successful and the VOICE Toolkit continues to reduce the risks of re-traumatisation for clients. We will deliver migration and legal assistance to victims of family violence through other funding sources over the next financial year.

Through 2017-2018 we continued to advise clients in prison and detention through our Detention Advice Line, as well as provided advice and casework assistance to protection visa applicants, family reunion clients and people seeking administrative review. We have also been involved in work relating to modern slavery and human trafficking.

Overall, the numbers of clients that we helped was lower than previous years due to the end of the TPV clinics. We also saw a reduced proportion of clients receiving full application assistance as opposed to advice or minor assistance.

As we see clients approaching for assistance with increasingly complex matters, we continue to refine our methods of service delivery to best meet client needs in innovative and holistic ways.

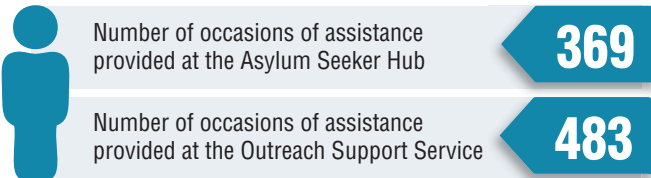


NPA Client Survey

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, all community legal services were required to conduct a client survey in 2018. The results of this survey were overwhelmingly positive:



Abdul* is a Hazara from Afghanistan who arrived by boat in 2013. He came to The Humanitarian Group for assistance to apply for protection. He was assisted by pro bono lawyers via our TPV Project evening clinics. Throughout the application process we were able to continue to provide support and assistance at our outreach service at the Asylum Seeker Hub. Abdul was successful in his application for a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa. We were able to continue supporting Abdul after his visa grant at the Asylum Seeker Hub by providing advice about travelling overseas to visit his wife and children.



Niyyat* is from Ethiopia. She applied for protection in Australia because she had participated in anti-government protests and suffered serious human rights violations as a result. We assisted Niyyat to apply for a protection visa. After she was unsuccessful at the primary stage, we assisted Niyyat to apply for review of the negative decision at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), including preparing for and attending the hearing. The AAT remitted Niyyat's matter to the Department of Home Affairs and she subsequently received a permanent protection visa.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRO BONO AND COLLABORATION

In 2017-2018 we were once again overwhelmed by the pro bono, in-kind, volunteer and collaborative contributions from our community, including service providers, law firms and individuals.

With the end of the TPV Project clinics post 1 October 2017, as well as our limited capacity to supervise volunteers due to restricted resources and office space, the number of active volunteers this year has been reduced. Notwithstanding this, our volunteers recorded over 7,000 hours. This amazing contribution is integral in allowing us to provide vital services to as many people as we do.

At the Asylum Seeker Hub, we collaborate with a number of agencies,

including the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS), Red Cross, MercyCare, Riverview Community Services, the Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees (CARAD), Careers Kitchen and Fremantle Multicultural Centre. Red Cross also supports us by hosting our Outreach Support Service. All of these agencies are supported by volunteers. Both our clients and our organisation have reaped the benefits of their generous commitment.

We are also fortunate to partner with the Piddington Justice Project and The University of Western Australia to provide practical legal placements to law graduates and internships to university students.



Volunteer Hours **7,400**



Legal and Administrative Volunteers **36**



Registered Bilingual Volunteers **138**



Pro Bono Lawyers **12**



Internships and Placements **12**

Darna* came to Australia from the Philippines. She was a victim of family violence and The Humanitarian Group provided advice and assistance in relation to her visa status following the breakdown of her marriage. Darna also sought advice about obtaining a divorce from her husband. The Humanitarian Group assisted Darna to prepare the divorce application and provided advice on processes. A volunteer lawyer was also able to provide Darna with advice about her financial entitlements following the breakdown of her marriage. Darna was successful in obtaining a divorce. She decided not to pursue a property settlement but was able to make an informed decision based on her knowledge of her rights and entitlements.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our clients have come from around the world to start new lives in Australia. With this in mind, The Humanitarian Group acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of this nation. We acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which our organisation is located. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging.

We benefit from a diverse and experienced Board. This year, we bade farewell to Han Nguyen, Anne Durack and Megan O'Rourke, all of whom we sincerely thank for their contributions. We also welcomed Greg McIntyre, who has brought new skills and experience to the Board.

We are grateful to our dedicated and passionate staff. As a team, they continue to provide professional and accessible legal and migration assistance to vulnerable people in Western Australia. This year, we said sad goodbyes to Helen Pearce, Megan McCormack and Narelle Seth. We wish them all the best in the next chapters of their careers. We also welcomed Daniel Santos and casual relief cover from Leanne Hill. We are very glad to have them as part of our team.

We are sincerely thankful to our volunteers and pro bono providers. We could not assist as many people as we do without their generous support, which plays a vital role in achieving positive outcomes for our clients.

We are also grateful for the strong relationships we have with organisations across a number of networks. This allows us to work in partnership with non-legal service providers, so our clients benefit from holistic support. It is only with the invaluable support of these organisations that we can continue to provide access to justice.



Gedion* is from Ethiopia. The Humanitarian Group successfully assisted Gedion to bring his wife and children to Australia, including his sister's children, whom he adopted after his sister passed away. Gedion and his family can now start the next chapter of their lives living together in safety.

BOARD

CHAIRPERSON
Akram (Ak) Sabbagh

Treasurer:
Anna Lane

MEMBERS

Dr Lisa Cluett

Emma Watton

Maria Osman

Greg McIntyre SC

STAFF

Principal Solicitor
and Migration Agent
Kathy Bogoyev
(MARN: 1462786)

Executive Manager
Carol Child

Solicitor and
Migration Agent
Marti Rinsma
(MARN: 0853256)

Solicitor and
Migration Agent
Bernie Carrick
(MARN: 1067227)

Solicitor and
Migration Agent
Tannaz Pasha
(MARN: 1461318)

Solicitor and
Migration Agent
Katy Welch
(MARN: 1683261)

Migration Agent
Gwynneth Moyle
(MARN: 0851256)

Administrative
Officer
Daniel Santos

Front
Office
Christopher Hogg

Communication and Education Manager
Jessica Bayley
(Solicitor and Migration Agent, MARN: 1572396)

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

The Humanitarian Group continues to maintain a high standard of governance and financial accountability. The organisation prepares financial accounts in accordance with relevant accounting standards and is independently audited under the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As an added level of financial accountability, quarterly audits of the organisation's financial records were introduced during the year. The Humanitarian Group reviewed and updated all of its policies and procedures and risk management plan as part of its accreditation under Phase 2 of the quality assurance scheme operated by the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC). The Humanitarian Group also participated in the NACLC Professional Indemnity Scheme.

During the year the members approved the adoption of a new Constitution which was required under the Associations Incorporation Act 2015.

Despite an organisational restructure The Humanitarian Group made a loss of \$25,995 in the year 2017-2018 as it faced a decrease of 24% in income. However, it remains in a healthy financial position with reserves of \$294,000 and cash of \$632,000 at 30 June 2018.

The fall in income was mainly due to the cessation of the Primary Application Information Service contract at the end of June 2017 and an 85% drop in fundraising and donations. In 2016-2017 a one off crowd funding event for our TPV Project raised over \$90,000. During 2017-2018 a total amount of \$25,000 was fundraised or donated and we would like to acknowledge the many individuals and organisations who directly donated to us.

The reduction in our funding was managed by reducing our employment costs from \$782,000 to \$655,000, a decrease of 16%. Employment costs included a sum for redundancies arising from the organisational restructure. An amount of \$19,000 was transferred from reserves to offset this. The percentage of our costs expended on salaries and wages remains high at 80% thereby ensuring the optimisation of our service delivery.

Other expenses reduced to \$157,000 from \$242,000. This was mainly accounted for by a drop in interpreter costs as our overall number of clients reduced and we continued to receive income to help offset the cost of interpreting for our TPV clients.

Summaries of our finances are shown below. Full copies of our audited accounts are available and can be requested by emailing admin@thehumanitariangroup.org.au.

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Immigration Advice and Application Assistance Service (IAAAS) \$192,524 | |
| Legal Aid - Community Legal Services Program \$150,856 | |
| Legal Aid – One Off Grant \$100,000 | |
| The Law Society of WA, Public Purposes Trust \$100,000 | |
| Department of the Attorney General (Cth) \$95,000 | |
| United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture \$49,625 | |
| Other Grants \$4,000 | |
| Fundraising and Donations \$24,932 | |
| Interest and Other \$69,088 | |
| | 2017-18 TOTAL INCOME \$786,025 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Salaries & Wages \$655,032 | |
| Administration Costs \$87,806 | |
| Property Costs \$53,812 | |
| Other Costs \$15,370 | |
| | 2017-18 TOTAL EXPENDITURE \$812,020 |

| Profit and Loss | 2018 \$ | 2017 \$ |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Grants & Fees | 692,005 | 806,340 |
| Fundraising & Donations | 24,932 | 169,270 |
| Interest & Other | 49,685 | 61,134 |
| Transfer from Reserves | 19,403 | 0 |
| Total Income | 786,025 | 1,036,744 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Salaries & Wages | 655,032 | 782,069 |
| Other Expenses | 156,988 | 241,867 |
| Total Expenses | 812,020 | 1,023,936 |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------|
| Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year | (25,995) | 12,808 |
|--------------------------------|----------|--------|

| Balance Sheet | 2018 \$ | 2017 \$ |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fixed Assets | 15,064 | 18,716 |
| Current Assets | 706,864 | 571,288 |
| Current Liabilities | 384,140 | 221,704 |
| Non-Current Liabilities | 44,000 | 29,114 |
| Net Assets | 293,788 | 339,186 |

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Retained Earnings | 87,654 | 113,649 |
| Reserves | 206,134 | 225,537 |
| Total Equity | 293,788 | 339,186 |

Mariam* is from Egypt. She came to Australia on a visitor visa and applied for a protection visa because of the persecution she experienced primarily as a result of her religion. Mariam was elderly and had significant health issues. Mariam's application was refused by the Department and by the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT). The Humanitarian Group considered that there were excellent grounds to request Ministerial Intervention, particularly as the situation in Mariam's home country had deteriorated since the earlier decisions were made. Almost two and a half years after the RRT refusal, Mariam received notification that her Ministerial Intervention application was successful and that she had been granted a visa to remain permanently in Australia.

* Clients' real names have not been used in case studies. We have withheld our clients' identifying details to respect their confidentiality.



the Humanitarian group

Opening Hours
Monday to Thursday 9am to 3pm

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